

*From
Distant
Shores*

Mary E. Adams

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*FROM
DISTANT
SHORES*

Poems

MARY ELECTA ADAMS



Tantramar Marshes

By the Marshes of Tantramar.

RECOLLECTION.

EVENING is falling with a star :
I wander lonely and afar
Down by the marshes of Tantramar.

The broad, red west like a furnace glows,
And the wind like a Titan's bellows blows,
'Till one could not tell if it burned or froze.

Wide reaches the strand of Fundy's bay,
A-gleam with the sinking light of day,
As the tide-wave—spent—it rolls away.

A timbered bridge with shadows black,
And spans awry, an ancient wrack,
I cross it over the turbid track.

The gurgling growl of the muddy tide
Creeps up by the bridge's leaning side,
And a sound, like the voice of one who cried,
Turns the spectral bridge to a haunted tower,
Where the bravest heart would be like to
 cower,
If he chanced that way at a darker hour.

The grasses are moving to and fro,
Where the wild geese cackled long ago,
And the Frenchman builded his aboiteaux.

From up where the rivers rushed so brave,
'Twixt the red-lipped shores, the tidal wave
Comes crawling back to its ocean grave.

REFLECTION.

I muse on the life that has no stay ;
With the steadfast look it is here and away,
And whither it goes I cannot say.

The years and the sea and the star are the
 same,
And the broad, red west hath been often
 afame,
But it standeth still in the mighty frame.

O Eye that can see through the æons dim,
Through the realms of space to the farthest
 rim,
Where the universe stretches filled to the
 brim ;

O Ear that can hear the gurgling tide,
And the music of stars in the spaces wide,
Almighty! Behold, doth aught abide?

I listen, I fear, I fall on my face;
The darkness is coming with silence apace—
O, who can the shadows and mystery chase?

RECALL.

Bow lowly, O spirit, bow low in the dust.
Shall the coming of changes invade with
distrust?

Bow lowly, what folly to think that it must.

What folly! It shames me to round in with
sense

The limitless work of omnipotence,
Or fear for the changes that bear us hence.

What wouldst thou, through earth and the
heavens to plod?

The universe changeless would be but a clod,
And change is the name of the working of
God.

Alone ?

THE sunlight through the open door
Comes in, and streams along the floor,
The slant rays of a falling August sun
Well-nigh throughout its sultry circuit run ;
And hushed is every sound of breeze or leaf
or bird,
Save the low trill of insects, past the lattice
heard,
In the dry grass
As the hours pass.

I sit alone, unless those forms,
Familiar through the calms and storms
Of many a year of summer bloom and winter
rude,
To all this loveliness and solitude,
Command a presence here and, gliding in,
Keep company with silence for a hymn.
I think they do
As falls the dew.

But be it that they dwell afar,
Beyond the range of sun or star,
And visit never more this pleasant spot
We walked together, it is not forgot :
Their image starts from every niche ; 'tis
there,
Daguerreotyped upon the golden air.
From flower and tree
They look at me.

Low falls the sun, and paler grows
The air, dark-thickened as he goes,
'Till earth is blotted out beneath my
gaze,
And not an object past my vision strays ;
And sense of losing, unsought visitant,
Hov'ring around each vacant space and
haunt,
Would break some spell,
Yet is it well.

Sweet mocking visions ! Ye would leave,
As yonder sun the world at eve,
No light upon the midnight of my thought,
Deep wrapped in gloom or into frenzy
wrought,
Unless a deeper recollection on me poured,
A wealth of knowledge in remembrance
stored,
Which giveth light
On my heart's night.

I love you, O ye shades, but not
With full and final love ; I wot
Ye are but pictures of an absent face—
Not that the darksome grave doth so abase
Beneath the damp and mouldering sod,
But that which ever-living, ever looks on
God.
O vision blest !
O blessed rest !

Fade, then, thou sunlight; fade, ye blooms;
Thou solid earth, fade out; the glooms
Of nothingness are naught, this mortal
sense—

That blind—each grandeur of the sphere
immense—

How grand—is welcome to depart;
They cannot leave to vacancy the heart,
Which sees afar,
Past sun or star,
Past day and night,
The Infinite light.



Launch of the Hiawatha.

WAY! Thou wert meant for the
wave, fair thing,
And thou sittest like ocean bird
On the drifting tide, with folded wing,
Which the light wind had scarcely stirred.

How bright is the sunshine, how joyous the
tide,
And how gaily he kisses thy prow!
Come, tell us, thou beautiful ocean bride,
What is it he whispers thee now?

Thou wilt not? Adieu, then, good speed
and away!

But we tremblingly follow thy form.
'There's brightness and calm on the ocean
to-day;
To-morrow, the wreck and the storm.

Aye, telleth the deep, the old deep, saith he
Of the strange and the wondrous life,
Where the ghosts of the tempests lurking be,
And the elements laugh in their strife?

On his white-flashing mane, where the whirl-
wind raves,
He may toss thee full high in the air;
He may plunge thee in caverns of hollow
waves,
And bid thee lie down in his lair.

But gentler, for lo! there are beauteous scenes
Which the hoary old ocean can show,
There are things passing strange, like our
wizard dreams,
Thou shalt find them wherever thou go.

On a bright, glassy sea where the dolphins
play,
And the sunshine, on zephyrs' soft wings,
Shall laughingly mix with the dancing spray
Which the sea-god sportingly flings.

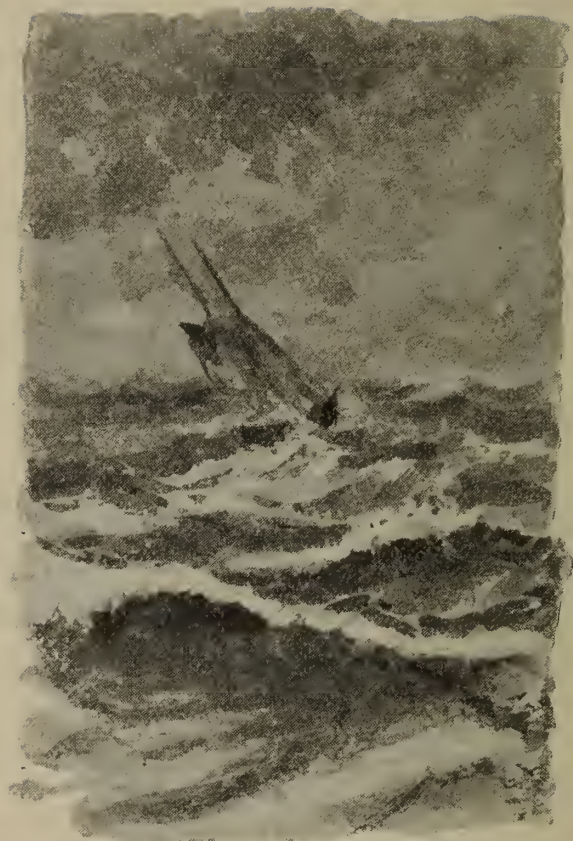
Or out o'er the wide ocean desert thou sail,
Where the sea-monster follows thy track,
And the reefs and the breakers make ocean
quail,
And echo his grim howlings back.

Thy tapering masts may be lightning
wreathed,
And the whistle of death through thy
shrouds
May chime with the thunders, hoarsely
breathed
From the low and muttering clouds.

Perchance thy dead canvas shall heavily flap
On a windless and tideless shore,
Where the pestilence shakes from his
poisoned lap
The deaths he is keeping in store.

Thy pennons may flutter on scented breeze
By the groves of some Indian isle,
Or their stiffened folds among icebergs freeze,
Where summer may never smile.

What countries of storied romance shalt
thou see?
What lands that are lonely and bare?
What wonders of nature unheard of may be
In the pathway o'er which thou shalt
fare?



And wilt thou come back to us old, very old,
With dark sea-weed and shells on thy keel,
And ask to be mingled with earthly mold,
Thy voyaging o'er of woe or of weal?

Or, rent thy strong timbers and masts of
pine,
Shalt thou float in an open grave,
And drift in the currents of weltering brine
At the will of the merciless wave?

Or down, sunken down below coral and
pearl,
With the slow moving dregs of the sea,
Rock darkling where tempests their banners
furl
And quietly sleep beside thee?

Aha ! but the wild ocean hath thee now,
And no vision so weird that may see,
With the fingers of destiny over his brow,
What the ocean is keeping for thee.

*Jesus Amor Meus.**

THE sunlight gleams on the whitened
walls

Of the ancient fortress keep,
And the step of midnight noiseless falls
On those that smile and those that weep.

Jesus Amor Meus.

The surging tide of life goes by,
But its roar is never heard ;
And beneath the sunshine of the sky
Within those walls no breath hath stirred.

Jesus Amor Meus.

The king in pageantry passeth now,
And the priest in saintly stole,
And the toiled-stained man with sweaty
brow,
And the homeless wretch with weary dole.

Jesus Amor Meus.

*Engraved on the walls of the Lollard's Tower, London, by a prisoner under ban of the Roman Church, who, holding fast his faith in spite of entreaties and torture, was left finally to perish in solitude.

The storm beats dark on the Lollard's
Tower,
And its massive turrets shake ;
The trembling steps of the passer cower,
The watchman's mail-clad heart doth
quake.

Jesus Amor Meus.

O, dread the footsteps approaching now,
As yon black-robed forms appear :
There's a little paleness on the brow,
But a lofty spirit, calm and clear.

Jesus Amor Meus.

What wait they for by that calm, pale man,
'Neath the daylight's open glare,
With cross and wafer and priestly ban ?
Nor cross nor priest are needed there.

Jesus Amor Meus.

With demon scowl are the portals closed
To the paths of living men ;
But on loving Arm that head reposed
On which no day might dawn again.

Jesus Amor Meus.

The death-damp creeps from the mouldy
wall

On the stiffened limbs to seize,
And the leaden shadows slowly fall,
Like coffin-lid, the heart to freeze.

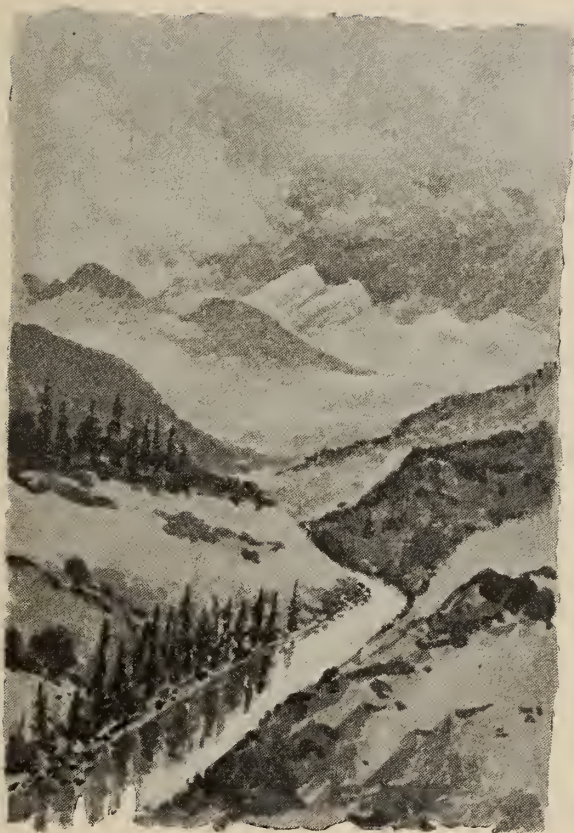
Jesus Amor Meus.

O spectral tortures, gaunt and grim
With the gleam of martyr fires—
O death in life, ye cannot dim
The goal to which that heart aspires.

Jesus Amor Meus.

The lichen grows on the dungeon floor
In the moisture dank and chill,
And the deep-driven bolt is drawn no more,
But graven there one readeth still—

"Jesus Amor Meus."



Bow River, Morley

Among the Foot-Hills of the Rockies.

OME, let us walk. 'Tis of the summer
day—

The long, long summer day—the
lingering afternoon,

And Nature here has phases all her own
I would not miss. Swift swings the river down
From yonder towering two-leaved mountain
gates,

O'erhung with drapery of rose and pearl,
Past winding slopes, along the valley's
length,

In deep concealment now, now flashing by,
Contemptuous of delay, flinging a kiss

In passing ; lost at length in hazy light.

What hands have levelled all those terraces

That look upon his course? Now see aloft

Where swaths of shadow fall and slide

Among the gold upon the dimpled hills,

Cadenced in their vast and rhythmic sweep,

By hollows and by seams that once were
filled

With rushing torrents. See! see how they lie
Fold upon fold, in cycles of the past,
Or wind or wave-swept into glorious shapes,
And piled against the azure of the heavens.
'These undulating lines, like silenced waves
Taken in mid-course of their unrivalled leap,
To fix forever their unresting course,
Seem to my eyes, in the calm evenings, still
To palpitate away into the moving sky.

Remenyi's Violin.

PRETTY jewelled thing ! It seemed
To flash upon us, then to turn and
wait

In sympathy upon his downcast face,
Speak back again, and laugh and weep and
rave

With him, as if it had an answering soul.
And as the heart, deep-stirred,
Turned tremulous to rest when silence came,
Awe seized me, and I marvelled how
The hand that fashioned it with curious care
In old Cremona, nigh two hundred years ago,
Reached deftly past the gulf of space and
time,
And with the artist wrought to make this
tumult in my soul.

Refreshment.

HAST thou had hours when life seemed
empty all,
And waste the garden thou wert set
to till,
Like tide-swept sands that only white and
still
Unanswering lay beneath the heaven's gray
pall?
No ripening fruit to offer at His call,
Discouragement hath waited on the will;
And did some human voice, that bro't a thrill
Out of the silence, on thy hearing fall:
“ I could not rest till I had come to see
And tell you how your life hath blessed mine
own ”?
Burst a cool spring; the heart, refreshed and
free,
Went on its way under a smiling sun.
If ever this had happened unto thee,
Thou knowest a joy that's next to God's
“ Well done! ”

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